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## **Building an Inclusive Development Community:** **Gender Appropriate Technical Assistance to InterAction** **Member Agencies on Inclusion of People with Disabilities**

**Mobility International USA (MIUSA)**  
**USAID Cooperative Agreement Award No. GEW-A-00-01-00012-00**  
**Performance Report**  
**Project Fourteenth Quarter: January-March 2005**

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### **Project goals**

To increase participation by people with disabilities, especially women and girls with disabilities, in InterAction member agencies as participants, staff, administrators, and beneficiaries.

To increase implementation of the Disability Amendments to the InterAction PVO Standards by InterAction member agencies regarding inclusion of people with disabilities, especially women and girls with disabilities, in organizational governance, management, and programs.

### **Accomplishments**

During the fourteenth quarter of the *Building an Inclusive Development Community* project, MIUSA and our partners have focused our attention on preparing for and undertaking end-of-project evaluation activities, as well as preparing for a face-to-face field-based training event. MIUSA and project partners have also disseminated information about the project and preliminary lessons learned to the wider development audience. Highlights in the fourteenth quarter include the following:

- MIUSA, together with project partners, planned and initiated face-to-face review meetings at partner headquarters as part of the end-of-project evaluation.
- MIUSA worked with Mercy Corps in planning a face-to-face field-training event for Mercy field staff, key partners, and Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs) in the Middle East.
- MIUSA presented information about and preliminary results from the project at a brown bag lunch at the World Bank.
- MIUSA worked with the Diversity Manager at InterAction to facilitate a panel discussion on U.S. legislation related to disability and development, implications at USAID, and practical examples of implementation.

- MIUSA continues to respond to requests for technical assistance and information from international development organizations and disability organizations.
- MIUSA continues to expand the availability of resources in languages accessible to the field offices of our partners.
- MIUSA continues to make progress on developing new resource materials.

### **Model Partnerships**

In the fourteenth quarter of the project, MIUSA and our partners have shifted our focus from implementation of action plans to an organization-specific assessment of achievements related to the action plans. This process has involved conceptual work on an evaluation framework, as well as a participatory process of planning and implementing organizational review sessions that will contribute towards the final project report. In addition, MIUSA worked closely with Mercy Corps in the planning and development of a second field-level training event. MIUSA continues to respond to requests for information from our Model Partner Organizations (MPOs) and their field partners.

#### ***Technical assistance in the field:***

In the fourteenth quarter, MIUSA worked closely with Mercy Corps to plan for face-to-face training of field staff and partner organizations in the Middle East. The purpose of the training is to improve knowledge and understanding of rights-based approaches to inclusion of and service provision for people with disabilities among Mercy Corps staff and key partner organizations. The training will take place in Jordan. Participants from the following countries are expected to attend: Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Egypt. Mercy Corps and MIUSA agreed upon the following workshop objectives:

- Mercy Corps staff and staff of partner organizations will develop a greater understanding of how to include people with disabilities in the development of projects designed to address the needs of and provide opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Representatives of DPOs will have the opportunity to learn more about the activities of Mercy Corps and its partner organizations in the region.
- Mercy Corps staff and staff of partner organizations will have a better understanding of the key issues and needs of people with disabilities in the countries in which they work.
- Participants will have the opportunity to network, share experiences, and develop strategic plans for improving the participation of people with disabilities in the countries in which they live and work.

Based on the scope of work as outlined with Mercy Corps, MIUSA designed a two-day training workshop to meet the agreed-upon objectives. In addition, the following progress was made:

- Mercy Corps and MIUSA finalized a participant list.
- Mercy Corps drafted and disseminated a letter of invitation.
- MIUSA interviewed candidates and identified a regional workshop co-facilitator.
- MIUSA identified personnel responsible for the field visit and training workshop.

- MIUSA, in cooperation with Mercy Corps, developed a preliminary budget.
- Mercy Corps identified accessible lodging as well as an accessible meeting site.
- Mercy Corps made progress on regional logistics.
- MIUSA made progress on logistics for the facilitation team.

Mercy Corps and MIUSA have also invited representatives of other development organizations in or near Jordan to participate, including: American Friends Service Committee, Salt School for the Deaf, Land Mine Survivors Network, IFES, and Handicap International. DPO representation is drawn from four countries in the region.

***Training materials in languages and formats responsive to partner needs:***

As a result of the increased focus on providing technical support to the field, MIUSA continues to expand the availability of our resources in other languages and alternative formats. The preparation of spoken language voiceovers for training videos in Spanish has been completed, and the preparation of videos with French voiceovers has begun. Voiceovers allow people with visual impairments to access the videos. As noted in previous reports, captions for training videos are now available in French, Spanish, Arabic, and Russian. Captions allow people who are Deaf to access the information contained in MIUSA's training videos. Translation priorities are based on requests from our partners and their field offices.

***End of project evaluation:***

This project phase comes to an end on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April. In the fourteenth quarter, MIUSA has focused on planning, preparing, and initiating the end-of-project evaluation process. In order to undertake this work, an evaluation guide was developed and disseminated to all partners. Each partner was asked to review its organizational action plan and assess progress on the benchmarks established at the beginning of the partnership. Face-to-face meetings were scheduled with each partner to review results of the action plan assessment process and provide a forum for evaluative discussion. The guide sent to each partner in advance of face-to-face meetings asked partners to prepare to:

- Reflect on the strategies used to accomplish the objectives and consider what worked and what didn't work.
- Discuss which outcomes were most important to the organization.
- Reflect on unexpected outcomes and recommendations about them.
- Think about what challenges were most difficult to address.

In addition, MIUSA asked partners to reflect on the support provided throughout the project and to provide feedback on the following:

- The relative usefulness of technical support provided by MIUSA.
- MIUSA's level of availability in providing follow-up and technical assistance.

Finally, MIUSA asked organizations to reflect upon larger issues, including:

- Larger lessons learned and replicability.
- Organizational commitment in continuing to foster the inclusion of people with disabilities.

- Identification of specific plans (if any) for moving forward.

In the fourteenth quarter, end-of-project review sessions were carried out with three partners: American Friends Service Committee, Trickle Up Program, and Church World Service. Each partner provided detailed reporting on their action plan achievements and provided time for key staff to meet with MIUSA representatives for evaluation dialogue. West coast partners Mercy Corps and Holt International Children's Services are scheduled to participate in face-to-face review sessions in April. Although final results are not immediately available, the process itself is proving to be a valuable opportunity to both reflect on the partnership and the project over the last three years and renew a commitment to the inclusion of people with disabilities over the long term.

### **InterAction**

The inclusion of people, especially women, with disabilities as board members, managers, and staff of international development organizations is a key component of the *Building an Inclusive Development Community* project. MIUSA continues to participate in InterAction's Diversity Working Group, stressing the importance of including disability in the spectrum of diversity. During the fourteenth quarter, MIUSA was involved in the planning of InterAction's Diversity Challenge. The Diversity Challenge, which will be launched in April, is a campaign designed to support members in putting their commitment to diversity into action. It will encourage members of InterAction to demonstrate their commitment through participation in a series of activities that will advance the development of an inclusive organizational culture and integrate diversity into organizations and programs. In addition, MIUSA has provided information and resources for the development of a diversity guide that is being produced in conjunction with the campaign.

MIUSA, in coordination with Dawn Cooper, Diversity Manager at InterAction, organized a session designed to provide InterAction members with information on recent U.S. legislation related to disability and development, implications and current trends at USAID that affect contractors and grantees, and practical experiences of member organizations involved in disability and development work. A summary of the session is contained in the *Conferences* section below.

### **Technical Assistance Curriculum and Materials**

Technical assistance materials represent a key component of MIUSA's international development and disability services. This quarter, we are pleased to highlight the following progress:

#### ***Success stories:***

MIUSA has completed editing twenty success stories on inclusive development for this publication. The materials include stories from our partner organizations and provide a broad look at projects on disability and development and their relation to the Millennium

Development Goals. Each story has been carefully reviewed for content and message. The collection contains stories on a wide variety of project types and audiences. The *Building an Inclusive Development Community* project will be highlighted prominently in this publication, with testimonies from partner organizations and success stories from fieldwork. MIUSA will incorporate more stories after the evaluation process is complete. The process is providing an opportunity to speak in depth with partners about project experiences, which will enrich the publication. The printing date for the *Success Stories* publication is set for late April.

### ***Checklist for inclusion:***

The checklist continues to be used by a range of disability and development organizations. This quarter, the checklist was added as a link to Sweden's Independent Living Alliance resource website. The website is well known in the field and provides information and links on a wide range of topics related to disability and development, as well as to disability and human rights.

### ***Videos:***

The *Loud, Proud, and Prosperous* video was reviewed this quarter by David Bornstein, author of *Price of a Dream*, which is about the microfinance success of the Grameen Bank. Bornstein said, "*Loud, Proud, and Prosperous* is a valuable testament to the life-changing power of micro-lending for women entrepreneurs with disabilities. Although micro-enterprise is designed to create a more inclusive world, there are still very few examples of how micro-enterprise programs can be designed to empower disabled entrepreneurs. *Loud, Proud and Prosperous* helps fills that gap. I recommend this film to all microfinance institutions and development organizations seeking tools and ideas to create a world in which all people enjoy opportunities to improve their lives."

As noted previously, in the next month, the video and first edition of the manual will be paired for a special offer to InterAction members, microfinance institutions, and disability studies programs.

### **Information Services**

Information requests continue to be received from all over the world. This quarter, 86 percent of information requests came from overseas, of which:

- 46 percent came from organizations led by and for people with disabilities or individuals with disabilities.
- 24 percent came from international development organizations and NGOs.
- MIUSA received 30 percent more requests from the Middle East and North Africa than in the previous quarter.
- MIUSA received almost twice as many requests from Latin American countries than in the previous quarter.

This quarter, 14 percent of information requests came from the U.S., of which:

- 30 percent came from international development organizations (MPOs, InterAction members, and other international development organizations).

- 50 percent came from disability organizations or individuals with disabilities.

Examples of requests for information received this quarter include the following:

- The People's Health Assembly requested resources on HIV/AIDS and disability. MIUSA sent information on the recent World Bank/Yale study by Nora Groce, as well as a contact from one of our women's programs that is involved in this field.
- A representative of Comic Relief wrote asking for information about the manual. MIUSA sent press releases for our resources, as well as a tip sheet on inclusive development and an offer to put him in contact with our partners working in the same region.
- The leader of a Mexican disabled women's organization wrote asking for information about a disability conference in Dubai. MIUSA sent information on this conference, as well as links to other upcoming conference opportunities and a list of possible fundraising sources.
- The Program Manager on International Development for World Learning met a MIUSA staff member at a training in Washington, DC and asked for contact information in Ethiopia. MIUSA sent pertinent contacts and information on inclusive education.

#### ***Evaluation of I&R services:***

98 percent of evaluation respondents rated the information provided as either useful or very useful. Comments included the following:

- "Thank you so much for the great information! I have already referenced this in my latest project."
- "I am glad to inform you that two [of the funding organizations you recommended] have already assisted us and promised to assist other groups in my area."
- "Very wonderful resources! I will circulate this among our group - we have a project on disability awareness in Afghanistan and hope the travel ban will be lifted so we can go!"

#### ***Articles in print:***

MIUSA submitted an article on the workings of international development and disability umbrella organizations to the World Bank in March. The article highlighted the activities of VENRO, in Germany, and the *Building an Inclusive Development Community* project.

#### ***Websites, listservs, and other electronic promotion:***

Website: MIUSA has made changes to the layout of the international development and disability pages to make them more user-friendly and organized. The *Building an Inclusive Development Community* project is highlighted with a link on the first page; we continue to highlight new opportunities and resources on the first page as well. After the tsunami disaster in Southeast Asia, MIUSA posted a list of links and resources on working with refugees with disabilities and on pertinent legislation regarding reconstruction efforts.

Listservs: MIUSA continues to post information to development, disability and development, and gender and development listservs. Information this quarter has been shared regarding the following:

- Internship opportunities with MPOs
- Upcoming conferences and workshops
- A call for stories for the *Success Stories* publication

Conferences: In February, MIUSA presented at the World Bank on a rights-based approach to disability and the *Building an Inclusive Development Community* project. The presentation highlighted the work of MIUSA and our partners. It focused on preliminary lessons learned, both in terms of MIUSA's work providing technical support for inclusion and by our partners in the process of infusing a disability perspective in their development work.

The presentation began with an introduction to the history of MIUSA's development work that led up to the current project. MIUSA then discussed the original goals and principles associated with the work on the project, as well as the four main strategies that have been successful for us:

- Face-to-face training
- Ongoing technical support
- Providing useful resources
- Networking between disability and development organizations

MIUSA presented comments and strategies from partners and stressed the importance of local networking for successful disability inclusion.

During the last part of the session, MIUSA discussed preliminary project results and the specific progress that our partners have made in including people with disabilities in their organizations and programs. The session ended with a lively and informative question-answer session.

Also in February, MIUSA moderated a workshop at InterAction on recent legislation, developments at USAID, and implications for InterAction member organizations working with USAID. Presenters included representatives from USAID, Senator Tom Harkin's office, and InterAction member agencies with inclusive development experience, including Mercy Corps and Trickle Up Program, partners on the *Building an Inclusive Development Community* project. The presentation addressed:

- Disability-specific legislation included in the FY2005 Omnibus Appropriations bill.
- A current review of USAID accessibility standards.
- The establishment of an external advisory committee (comprised of representatives from various agencies and NGOs) formed to address disability issues and with a joint chairmanship held by USAID and the Department of State.
- The designation of a Disability Coordinator at USAID.
- Recent USAID initiatives, including Human Resources' efforts to identify and remedy barriers at USAID and the development of a web-based curriculum on disability and development.

- Practical experiences of InterAction members in including people with disabilities in development work.

The presentation was a success and a good opportunity to network; MIUSA received several requests for information from audience members and participants. Among other things, the suggestion to create a Disability and Development Working Group inside InterAction was repeated several times.

## **Conclusion**

As MIUSA and our partners complete the final stage of the *Building an Inclusive Development Community* project, we are predominately focused on collecting information and compiling strategies based on our individual and collective experiences with the project. In the fourteenth quarter, partners were asked to reassess progress on organizational action plans in preparation for end-of-project reporting. MIUSA looks forward to compiling information on the experiences and insights gained over the life of this project. We believe that the resultant project report will provide useful information to the development community as it moves towards an inclusive development perspective.

In the fourteenth quarter, concrete plans for face-to-face training have been developed for partners in the Middle East region. It is increasingly apparent that an ability to respond to field training and field networking needs is vital to the continued success of the work of our partners. We look forward to opportunities in the future that will enable the excellent groundwork of the last three years to take root in diverse countries around the globe.

We take great pleasure and pride in the accomplishments of the *Building an Inclusive Development Community* project and in its impact on the lives of people with disabilities, especially women and girls, throughout the world. We acknowledge with gratitude the support from USAID that has made this important work possible.